



## STATE OF IOWA

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
CHARLES J. KROGMEIER, DIRECTOR

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# Krogmeier: 'Speed up Empowerment for Disabled'

DES MOINES, Iowa—Department of Human Services Director Charles Krogmeier said Friday he has directed DHS officials to give renewed priority to several programs supporting choice and dignity for people with disabilities, especially programs providing services close to home.

"We have truly come a long way to empower people with mental health disorders and other disabilities, but it's time to speed up our efforts," he said.

He said it is essential to provide more services for people living at home or in small congregate settings, and to give people with disabilities a real choice of where to live.

"For many years Iowa has relied too heavily on institutional care for people with disabilities, especially mental retardation," he said. "We have made real strides. Discharges now exceed admissions at the resource centers in Glenwood and Woodward, but we need to do more to support local options."

Krogmeier gave his remarks Friday to the Olmstead Consumer Task Force, named for the decade-old U.S. Supreme Court decision declaring that people with disabilities who can safely live in their communities must be given the option to do so.

A top goal, he said, is to implement strategies that prevent the need for institutionalization.

One strategy is being launched this month, Krogmeier said. The DHS will dispatch two mobile crisis response teams to help parents or community providers to manage serious behavioral problems of people with intellectual disabilities. Behavioral issues often lead to institutionalization.

The crisis response teams will be headquartered at the Woodward Resource Center. They will provide both on-site and telephone assistance on short notice with ongoing follow-up as needed. The teams, made possible by funding from Iowa Medicaid, will also conduct 10 three-day seminars on how to develop plans to prevent and manage challenging behaviors.

Another goal, he said, is to provide more community options for people now living in large centers, such as the DHS-managed centers in Woodward or Glenwood.

Krogmeier said one of the state's main tools is a federal grant called Money Follows the Person which provides intensive support during the transition back home. Promotional materials are being prepared for wide distribution to residents and their families.

He also said he wants to develop new programs which permit Medicaid to support home or community-based living arrangements. These programs are known as home and community based "waivers" of regular Medicaid rules that pay for institutional care.

Krogmeier said the internal reorganization of the DHS that he announced last month will help coordinate efforts for the disabled. The restructured Mental Health and Disabilities Services division of the agency will now have oversight of all facilities managed by the DHS, including Glenwood and Woodward plus the four mental health institutes.

He said he has several other goals:

- Reduce the number of people with behavioral challenges who must be sent to facilities out of state because there are no Iowa providers capable of meeting their needs.
- Coordinate with other state agencies to provide more employment opportunities for the disabled.
- Seek federal government approval of an amendment to Iowa's Medicaid Health Information Technology Plan that would make it easier for consumers and service providers to learn information about vacancies, placements, and client needs.